

HELP WANTED:

Highlights from the
Second Quarter, 2004
Louisiana Job Vacancy Survey

Lake Charles Regional Findings

Louisiana Department of Labor
Developed by the Research & Statistics Division
for the Office of Workforce Development



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WHERE are the vacancies?

Lake Charles Vacancies by Occupational Group

Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Employment in Occupation	Percent Requiring More than a High School Diploma	Percent Requiring at Least Some Work Experience	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Personal Care & Service	613	3,390	67.61%	50.06%	\$6.50
Office & Administrative Support	366	16,410	16.94%	93.43%	\$6.00
Transportation & Material Moving	344	7,270	28.73%	94.19%	\$6.25
Sales & Related	287	10,610	12.58%	47.15%	\$6.50
Construction & Extraction	271	8,920	9.09%	100.00%	\$12.50
Healthcare Support	159	2,230	33.02%	35.61%	\$6.00
Food Preparation & Serving Related	158	9,990	0.95%	77.21%	\$6.00
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical Management	150	6,600	96.38%	33.06%	\$16.49
Business & Financial Operations	85	5,400	93.40%	100.00%	\$18.27
Production	79	2,720	96.63%	96.63%	\$11.54
Protective Service	53	7,790	0.00%	100.00%	NA
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	39	4,020	0.00%	0.00%	\$6.00
Architecture & Engineering	21	5,450	6.91%	100.00%	\$9.70
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	16	2,010	100.00%	100.00%	\$40.00
Non-Classifiable Occupations	13	3,410	0.00%	57.94%	\$6.00
Computer & Mathematical Science	12	NA	61.79%	61.79%	\$8.00
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	6	630	84.21%	57.89%	\$10.00
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	3	330	0.00%	0.00%	\$10.00
Community & Social Services	0	670	NA	NA	NA
Education, Training & Library	0	1,170	NA	NA	NA
Legal	0	6,240	NA	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	340	NA	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	1,000	NA	NA	NA
Total, All Occupational Groups	2,675	106,600	38.17%	70.17%	\$6.50

Job titles with many openings

Truck Drivers (Heavy & Tractor Trailer) (194 openings)
 Insulation Workers (123)
 Stock Clerks & Order Fillers (119)
 Laborers & Freight, Stock & Material Movers (119)
 Gaming Service Workers (108)
 Nursing Aides, Orderlies & Attendants (93)
 Receptionists & Information Clerks (92)
 Retail Salespersons (87)
 Cashiers (83)
 Budget Analysts (77)

Lake Charles Vacancies by Industry Group

Industry Group	Number of Vacancies	Industry Employment	Vacancy Rate	Median Hourly Wage Offered
Other Services	614	2,628	23.36%	\$6.50
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	566	23,112	2.45%	\$5.50
Leisure & Hospitality	398	16,376	2.43%	\$6.50
Construction	355	10,594	3.35%	\$12.50
Education & Health Services	340	24,177	1.41%	\$7.50
Professional & Business Services	224	7,702	2.91%	\$6.35
Financial Activities	93	4,872	1.91%	\$6.50
Information	47	1,690	2.78%	\$2.90
Manufacturing	37	11,149	0.33%	\$9.70
Natural Resources & Mining	2	1,979	0.10%	\$9.00
Total, All Industry Groups	2,675	104,279	2.57%	\$6.50

WHAT do these numbers mean ?

There were 2,675 reported vacancies in the Lake Charles Regional Labor Market Area (RLMA), with an overall vacancy rate of 2.57 percent -- meaning that for every 100 jobs, approximately three were vacant at the time of the survey. Personal Care & Service occupations had the largest number of reported vacancies (613); this group comprised about 23 percent of all vacancies in the area.

Education and experience requirements varied widely across occupational groups. For example, in Business & Financial operations occupations, nearly 97 percent of openings required education beyond a high school degree and at least some work experience. By contrast, Healthcare Support occupations required little education and experience: only about one third of these openings required more than a high school diploma, and just under 36 percent required previous work experience of any sort. Wages varied by occupation, as well. While the overall median wage offered for vacancies in the Lake Charles RLMA was \$6.50, wages ranged from \$6.00 per hour in Office & Administrative Support occupations to \$40.00 per hour in Architecture & Engineering occupations.

The table directly above shows Lake Charles area vacancies by industry group. (See the sidebar on page 5 of this report for more on the differences between *industries* and *occupations*.) Other Services had the largest share of vacancies, accounting for about 23 percent of all openings in the area. This industry group consists of businesses which offer services *besides* those already classified in education, health, professional, and business services -- such as repair, personal, and private household services, and membership organizations (e.g., churches or civic organizations).

A SNAPSHOT

of Lake Charles job vacancies

Overall, Lake Charles RLMA employers were seeking experienced workers. An estimated 70 percent of all reported vacancies required at least some previous work experience. One in three vacancies required some experience in any field; another 27 percent required up to two years of experience in the same field, and 10 percent required over two years of experience in the same field.

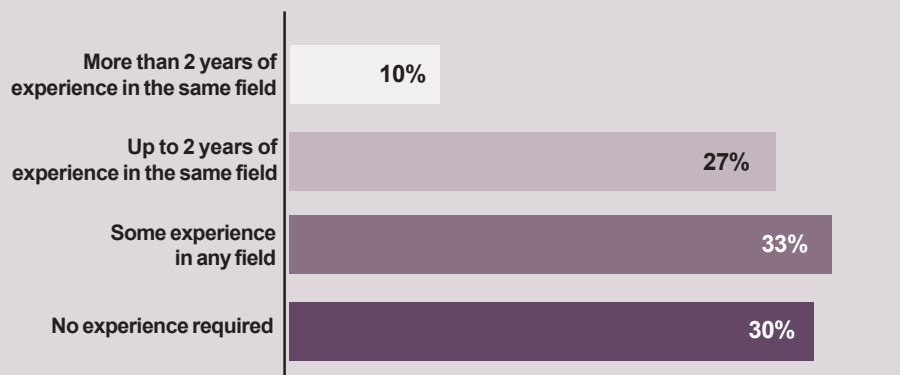
On the other hand, less than five percent of all Lake Charles RLMA vacancies required a four-year college degree or higher. Just four percent required a bachelor's degree, while less than one percent required an advanced degree. The sidebar to the left provides more information on education levels in job vacancies.

More than half of all job vacancies in Lake Charles offered wages of \$7.00 per hour or less. The majority of vacancies (53 percent) offered wages of between \$5.16 and \$7.00 per hour. At the other end of the spectrum, approximately nine percent of all vacancies offered wages of more than \$16.00 per hour.

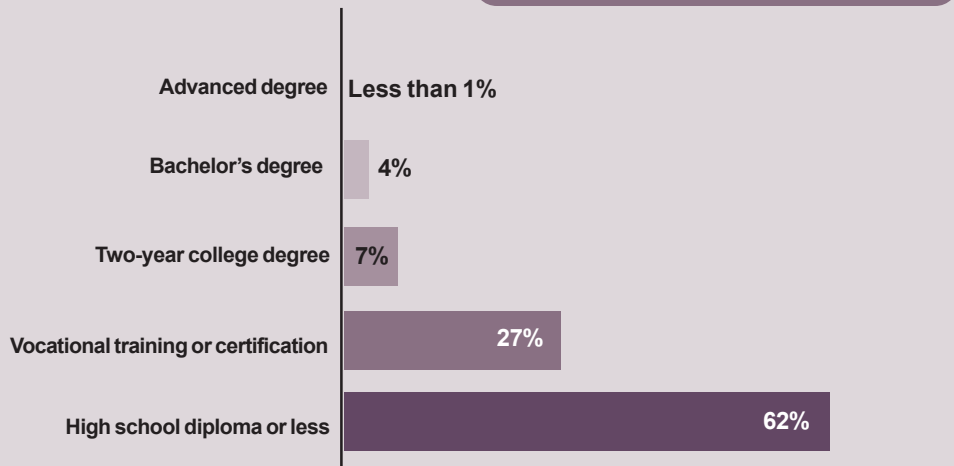
Why do most vacancies require a high school diploma or less?

The picture painted by these figures may look grim, but there is a good reason why most vacancies require little education. Simply put, occupations that require less education tend to have more turnover, all else equal. The latest estimate by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for median years of job tenure for professional and managerial workers was 4.8 in 2002. By contrast, sales workers, such as retail sales clerks, stayed a median 2.7 years and service workers, such as food service employees, stayed a median 2.4 years. Since retail sales clerks, food service workers, and other such jobs have high turnover, it stands to reason that these occupations, which require little formal education, will have many vacancies at any given point in time. To get a sense of the demand for workers over and above turnover levels, see the "hiring demand index" on page 7 of this report.

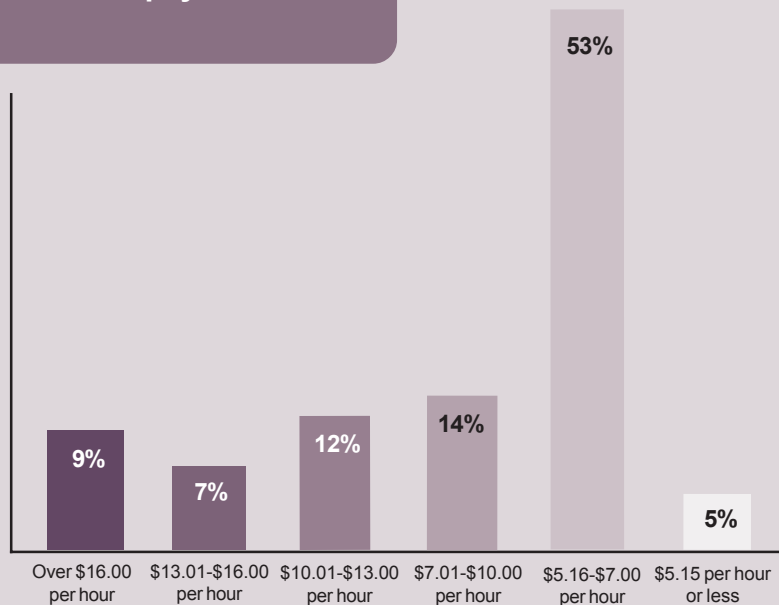
How much experience do Lake Charles job vacancies require?



How much education do Lake Charles job vacancies require?



How much do Lake Charles job vacancies pay?



What is the difference between an *industry* and an *occupation*?

An industry is a group of businesses, categorized according to the goods and services they provide. An occupation is a group of workers, categorized according to the skills they have and what they do on the job. For example, *health care* is an industry that includes many occupations -- doctors, nurses, administrators, and secretaries, to name a few. But *secretary* is an occupation that can be found in almost any industry. Each industry contains a variety of occupations, and many occupations -- such as janitors, computer support professionals, and database analysts -- can be found in every industry.

What did EMPLOYERS say?

Employers' Responses to the Open-Ended Question:
*"In trying to fill this position,
 what is the greatest difficulty you have faced, if any?"**

Reported Difficulty	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
<i>"We have been unable to find qualified applicants."</i>	20	15.5%
<i>"The applicants do not have the appropriate credentials." (Applicants meet all requirements other than the required certification certificates or licenses.)</i>	4	3.1%
<i>"Qualified applicants will not work for the compensation package we offer."</i>	1	0.8%
<i>"We have been unable to find applicants with the specific experience / training / skills / certification that we are seeking."</i>	16	12.4%
<i>"There is a shortage of people in this occupation."</i>	19	14.7%
<i>"[Some aspect of the job] is undesirable to applicants." (The position requires odd hours / the position is temporary / the position involves shift work)</i>	15	11.6%
<i>"The work ethic of people, once they are hired, is unacceptable." (People don't show up for work / if they do show up, they don't work / they fail drug tests)</i>	9	7.0%
<i>"Turnover - keeping people once they have been hired is the biggest problem."</i>	10	7.8%
<i>Some other difficulty mentioned</i>	2	1.6%
<i>No response</i>	33	25.6%
Total	129	100.1%

* Confidentiality concerns precluded publishing employers' verbatim responses. However, LDOL analysts reviewed all responses to the question above, grouped similar responses together, then re-worded the similar responses into one representative sentence or phrase, as shown above. Data shown in this table are unweighted. Percentages may not total to 100 percent due to rounding.

Major Occupational Group	Number of Vacancies	Vacancy Rate	Hiring Demand Index*	Median Number of Days Position was Vacant
Personal Care & Service	613	18.08%	High	60
Office & Administrative Support	366	2.23%	Average	2
Transportation & Material Moving	344	4.73%	High	14
Sales & Related	287	2.70%	Average	10
Construction & Extraction	271	3.04%	Average	7
Healthcare Support	159	7.13%	High	14
Food Preparation & Serving Related	158	1.58%	Low	14
Healthcare Practitioner & Technical Management	150	2.27%	High	60
Business & Financial Operations	85	1.57%	Average	30
Production	79	2.90%	High	30
Protective Service	53	0.68%	Low	7
Installation, Maintenance & Repair	39	0.97%	Low	27
Architecture & Engineering	21	0.39%	Low	45
Building & Grounds Cleaning & Maintenance	16	0.80%	Low	60
Non-Classifiable Occupations	13	0.38%	Low	7
Computer & Mathematical Science	12	NA	NA	30
Farming, Fishing & Forestry	6	0.95%	Low	21
Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports & Media	3	0.91%	Low	7
Community & Social Services	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Education, Training & Library	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Legal	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Life, Physical & Social Science	0	0.00%	NA	NA
Total, All Occupations	2,675	2.51%		21

Taking all of the labor shortage indicators together (the vacancy rate, the hiring demand index, and the median number of days positions remained vacant), Personal Care & Service occupations appeared most likely to be experiencing moderate to severe labor shortages. This occupation had a vacancy rate of over 18 percent -- far higher than the overall rate of 2.51 percent. It also had a high hiring demand index, and positions remained open a median of 60 days, suggesting that employers faced some difficulties when trying to fill these positions. Based on the data presented above, there was also some evidence of mild shortages in Healthcare Practitioner & Technical and Transportation & Material Moving occupations.

*The Hiring Demand Index indicates whether demand for workers in an occupational group is more than what we would expect from turnover levels alone. A "high" score on the Hiring Demand Index means that, all else equal, a labor shortage is **likely**, because there are more openings than we would expect to see from normal turnover alone. A "low" score means that a labor shortage is **unlikely**, because there are **not** more openings than we would expect to see from turnover alone. See the back cover of this report for more details on this measure.

Are there
LABOR SHORTAGES
 in Lake Charles?

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Second Quarter 2004 Job Vacancy Survey Findings are available for the state of Louisiana as well as all eight regional labor market areas (RLMAs). To order copies, or for more information, please contact the Louisiana Department of Labor's Research and Statistics Unit at (225) 342-3141, or toll-free at (888) 302-7662. You may also download any Job Vacancy Survey product from our Web site: www.LAWORKS.net/qm_JVSoverview.asp.

TECHNICAL NOTES

for the Second Quarter 2004
Job Vacancy Survey

THE SAMPLE

The Job Vacancy Survey was based on a random sample of Louisiana business establishments covered by Louisiana's unemployment insurance tax laws. The sample was stratified by firm size, region (including all eight regional labor market areas in Louisiana) and industry. This sample excludes certain types of establishments: small businesses with self-employed owners and some non-profit and religious organizations which are not covered by UI tax laws. In addition, the sample is limited to **private employers only**. **The vacancies reported in this study do not include openings with any federal, state, or local government entities in Louisiana.** The total sample size was 9,544. The overall response rate for this survey was 39.1%.

JOB VACANCY RATES

Vacancy rates are computed as the number of vacancies in an occupation divided by the total employment in that occupation. A vacancy rate of five percent means that for every 100 jobs, five were vacant at the time of the survey.

HIRING DEMAND INDEX

The Hiring Demand Index presented in this report measures demand for labor over and above the normal demand due to turnover. This measure, first constructed by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, is computed as follows:

(Job Vacancy Rate in the Occupation / Job Vacancy Rate in all occupations)

divided by

(Turnover rate in the occupation / Turnover rate in all occupations)

Job vacancy rates are calculated as discussed above, and national turnover rates were provided by the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. They were calculated using Current Population Survey (CPS) Job Tenure Supplement microdata.

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